UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.3/AC.1/1998/L.9
20 November 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL
STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES AND
COORDINATION
Nineteenth session
New York, 10-13 February 1998
Item 14 of the provisional agenda*

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

Proposals for the provisional agenda and documentation for the thirtieth session of the Statistical Commission

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

The present note contains proposals for the provisional agenda and documentation of the thirtieth session of the Statistical Commission (paras. 3 and 4); a note on the availability of document outlines (para. 5); and points for discussion by the Working Group (para. 6).

The annex contains proposed outlines for documents requested for the above-mentioned session, arranged by agenda item. A draft table of contents for each document is provided, in most cases accompanied by notes giving more details and, where appropriate, raising issues for consideration by the Working Group.

* E/CN.3/AC.1/1998/L.1.

97-32772 (E) 181297

/...

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	3
II.	PROPOSALS FOR THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION	3 - 4	3
III.	AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENT OUTLINES	5	3
IV.	POINTS FOR DISCUSSION	6	4
Annex.	Document outlines for the thirtieth session of the Statistical Commission, arranged by agenda item		5

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present note has been prepared in order to assist the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination in reviewing, at its nineteenth session, the provisional agenda and documentation for the thirtieth session of the Statistical Commission. The Commission had recommended to the Economic and Social Council that its thirtieth session be held in New York from 1 to 5 March 1999. The Council has approved that recommendation, and the session is scheduled in the calendar of conferences for the above-mentioned dates.

2. The Commission requested the Working Group to finalize, at its nineteenth session, the provisional agenda and documentation for its thirtieth session,[1] as set out in the report of the Commission on its twenty-ninth session[2] and approved by the Council at its substantive session of 1997.

II. PROPOSALS FOR THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

3. Having reviewed the provisional agenda and documentation as approved by the Council, the United Nations Statistics Division proposes to add the following items and documentation:

(a) "United Nations Economic and Social Information System": at its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission endorsed preparation of a technical publication on United Nations Economic and Social Information System (UNESIS) standards for metadata as part of the programme of work of the Division for the biennium 1998-1999. The Secretariat will prepare a progress report on that work for the thirtieth session of the Commission, as requested by the Commission;

(b) "Demographic, social and migration statistics": the Secretariat wishes to inform the Commission of progress in this broad area of statistics and to present draft revised principles and recommendations for vital statistics and civil registration systems.

4. In addition, following an initiative of the Task Force on Service Statistics (see E/CN.3/AC.1/1998/L.2, annex II, para. 2 (v)), the Secretariat proposes that under agenda item 8, "Service statistics", a draft manual on trade in services statistics be submitted to the Commission for adoption.

III. AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENT OUTLINES

5. Available document outlines are contained in the annex; the remainder will be issued as addenda to the present note as they become available.

IV. POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

6. The Working Group may wish to finalize the provisional agenda and documentation, including document outlines, for the thirtieth session of the Statistical Commission.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 4 (E/1997/24), para. 102 (a)).

[2] Ibid., chap. I A.

Annex

DOCUMENT OUTLINES[a] FOR THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION, ARRANGED BY AGENDA ITEM

Agenda as approved by the Economic and Social Council

1. Election of officers

Document requested

None

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Documents requested

Provisional agenda and annotations

Organization of the work of the session

State of preparation of documentation for the session

Proposed outlines

The provisional agenda will be finalized by the Working Group at its present session, based on the agenda proposed by the Commission at its twenty-ninth session, in 1997, and approved by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997. The United Nations Statistics Division will prepare annotations that will provide background for each agenda item and will indicate what actions the Commission may wish to take. A programme of work will be prepared to assist the Commission in completing its work within the week assigned for the session. A report on the availability of documentation for the session will also be issued.

3. International trade statistics

Document requested

Report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics

Proposed outline

I. Compiler's Manual

II. Customs areas of the world

III. Index numbers of international trade: technical information

IV. Provision of international trade statistics by countries to the United Nations Statistics Division in terms of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Cooling System

V. Revised concepts and definitions for international merchandise trade statistics

VI. Other matters

A. Use by the United Nations Statistics Division of monthly data compiled by the International Monetary Fund

B. Differences between annual figures in the commodity-by-partner trade database and in the United Nations Statistics Division/International Monetary Fund database of aggregate imports and exports

C. Arrangements among the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations Statistics Division for detailed trade data

D. Commodity-by-partner trade database: status, plans and user needs

E. Correlations between classifications used in trade

F. Quarterly data in the commodity-by-partner trade database

G. Trade in military goods

H. National reporting practices

The Task Force will provide updated information on work accomplished and plans on each of the above elements of its work.

4. International economic and social classifications

Document requested

Report of the Secretary-General on international economic and social classifications[b]

5. Statistical implications of recent major United Nations conferences

Documents requested

Report of the Secretary-General on implementation and use of the Minimum National Social Data Set[b]

Report on the seminar on poverty statistics, organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with other regional commissions[b]

6. Aspects of economic statistics

Document requested

Reports of the groups carrying out work on various aspects of economic statistics, including evaluation of the International Comparison Programme

Proposed outline

The various groups whose terms of reference were approved by the Statistical Commission in 1997 will present progress reports on the work undertaken in their areas. The groups will also outline any further activities that are planned.

The activities and proposed terms of reference of other groups or organizers of important events will also be included.

The United Nations Statistics Division will report on how it has contributed to making the results of the work of the city groups more widely available.

An evaluation of the International Comparison Programme will be presented, as requested by the Commission.

7. Environment statistics

Document requested

Report of the Task Force on Environment Statistics

Proposed outline

I. Compilation of environmental indicators

II. Revision of the system of integrated environmental and economic accounting

III. Future work

Section I will describe the collaboration of the Task Force in the international compilation of environmental indicators, through the sharing of existing data and assisting in the definition and description of indicators included in the survey of environmental indicators conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division.

Section II will describe possible collaboration of the Task Force with the United Nations Statistics Division and the London Group on Environmental Accounting in the revision of the System of Int· ·ated Environmental and Economic Accounting.

8. Service statistics

Documents requested

Report of the Task Force on Service Statistics (see also para. 4 above)[b]

Draft manual on trade in services statistics[b]

9. National accounts

Documents requested

Report of the Task Force on National Accounts

Proposed outline

I. A proposed process for updating the system of national accounts, 1993

II. Integrated presentation of the work programme of the intersecretariat working group on national accounts

III. Analysis of country-by-country milestone assessments

Section I will propose a mechanism for updating the System of National Accounts, 1993 (1993 SNA) in order to maintain its continued relevance. A typology of amendments, containing appropriate processes for handling proposed amendments, will be suggested.

Section II will present an integrated manner and in the format previously used for the Statistical Commission the work programme of the member agencies of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts, covering publications, meetings and seminars, as well as research activities.

Section III will give a country-by-country assessment of the implementation of the 1993 SNA, using the milestones approved by the Statistical Commission. A brief analysis of the situation and observed changes therein will be included.

Report of the Secretary-General on the draft classification of individual consumption by purpose, draft classification of the functions of government, draft classification of the purposes of the non-profit institutions serving households and draft classification of outlays of producers by purpose

Proposed outline

The report will provide background information on the development of each classification.

Draft classification of individual consumption by purpose

Draft classification of the functions of government

Draft classification of the purposes of the non-profit institutions serving households

Draft classification of outlays of producers by purpose

Proposed outlines

The complete text of each draft classification will be available.

10. Finance statistics

Document requested

Report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics

Proposed outline

The Task Force will report on progress made in specialized statistical systems related to finance statistics. In particular, the report will focus on the relationship between those specialized statistical systems and the 1993 SNA. In accordance with the amended terms of reference of the Task Force, the work programmes of international organizations in the area of finance statistics will also be presented.

11. Technical cooperation in statistics

Document requested

Report on the initiative to develop best practices and other issues

Proposed outline

The outline will be developed in the course of discussion by the Working Group of item 10 of its provisional agenda, 'Technical cooperation in statistics' (see E/CN.3/AC.1/1998/L.1).

12. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes

Documents requested

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its nineteenth session (New York 10-13 February 1998)

Proposed outline

The report will contain the decision and recommendations made by the Working Group at its nineteenth session on each item of its agenda.

Reports of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-first session (Geneva, 16-18 September 1997) and thirty-second session (New York, 7-9 June 1998)

Proposed outlines

The reports will contain the decisions and recommendations made by the Subcommittee at its thirty-first and thirty-second sessions on the following issues, among others:

(a) Classification of statistics and statistical activities;

(b) Environment statistics;

(c) Matters arising from the work of the Statistical Commission and its working group, and reporting on international statistical activities to the statistical commission and its working group;

(d) Issues related to the work of the task forces;

(e) Some critical problems in economic statistics and the role of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities in ad hoc Voorburg-type groups;

(f) Technical cooperation in statistics;

(g) Coordination of the follow-up to the statistical implications of recent major United Nations conferences;

(h) Coordination of statistical data-collection activities;

(i) United Nations economic and social information system;

(j) ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections;

(k) Functioning of the Subcommittee: Chairmanship and Bureau of the Subcommittee.

13. Programme questions and related matters

Document requested

Draft programme of work of the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat for the biennium 2000-2001: proposals concerning the medium-term plan for statistics

Proposed outline

I. Objectives of the statistics subprogramme

II. Activities and outputs envisaged and resource requirements of the statistics subprogramme

The introduction will include any further developments in the medium-term plan that forms the basis of the work programme for the 2000-2001 biennium (the Statistical Commission reviewed the draft medium-term plan for 1998-2001 at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, and at its twenty-ninth session in 1997, had before it the medium-term plan as adopted by the General Assembly in December 1996).

Section II will focus on the major objectives of the statistics subprogramme, which will be: (a) to improve the usefulness and accessibility of international economic and social data to policy makers, both international and national; (b) to implement the 1993 SNA; (c) to improve the international community's ability to measure the environmental impact of human activity and expenditures related to the environment; and (d) to develop and promote the use of consistent and integrated sets of social statistics, develop social indicators and enhance analytical capabilities in this area, and continue work on the coordination and development of international statistical standards across a broad spectrum of statistics.

Section III will then provide a detailed account of the different activities and outputs of the biennium. Analysis of the resource requirements of the United Nations Statistics Division to realize the proposed programme will also be provided.

14. Provisional agenda for the thirty-first session of the Commission

A draft provisional agenda will be prepared based on decisions of the Commission during the session.

15. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its thirtieth session

A draft set of decisions made by the Commission during the session will be prepared.

Proposed additions to the agenda

United Nations Economic and Social Information System

Document requested

Development of United Nations Economic and Social Information Systems standards for data structure and metadata in international data exchange and dissemination

Proposed outline

I. Need for data structure and metadata standards in international data exchange and dissemination

II. Selected national experience

III. Contents of standards and guidelines on data structure and metadata being developed for the United Nations Economic and Social Information System

IV. Coordination of United Nations Economic and Social Information System standards and guidelines with the Economic Commission for Europe/Conference of European Statisticians work programmes on electronic data interchange and meta-information systems, and the electronic data dissemination programmes of United Nations agencies, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

V. Timetable and objectives of the United Nations Economic and Social Information System project on metadata and data structure standards and guidelines

Demographic, social and migration statistics

Documents proposed

Progress report on demographic, housing, social and gender statistics, including draft recommendations for vital statistics and civil registration systems[b]

Draft recommendations on vital statistics and civil registration systems[b]

Note: Although not indicated in the outlines, an introduction and points for discussion or proposed action by the Commission will be included in each document.

Notes

[a] Where chapter headings are considered sufficiently explanatory, additional notes are not provided.

[b] Outline to be issued as an addendum to the present note.